

Message Text

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APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

P:JJSISCO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 281275

NODIS

CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY

SUBJECT: MESSAGE FOR PRESIDENT ASAD

REFS: A. DAMASCUS 4700

B. DAMASCUS 4717

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

YOU SHOULD SEEK A FURTHER APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT ASAD
AND CONVEY FOLLOWING POINTS TO HIM FROM ME:

A. I VERY MUCH APPRECIATE THE PRESIDENT'S FULL AND CON-
SIDERED RESPONSE TO THE VIEWS I ASKED YOU TO CONVEY TO
HIM UPON YOUR RETURN TO DAMASCUS. I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT
ON A FEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S OBSERVATIONS TO ENSURE THAT
THERE ARE NO MISUNDERSTANDINGS BETWEEN US.

B. SO FAR AS ANY FUTURE GOLAN NEGOTIATION IS CONCERNED, WE
HAVE NEVER RULED OUT THE IDEA THAT ANY FURTHER ISRAELI

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WITHDRAWAL COULD BE TO A STRAIGHT LINE ALONG THE ENTIRE

FRONT. THE PRESIDENT SHOULD NOT TAKE WHAT APPEARS IN THE ISRAELI PRESS ON THIS SUBJECT AS REFLECTING UNITED STATES VIEWS.

C. I ALSO WANT TO BE SURE THAT THE PRESIDENT UNDERSTANDS THAT, WHEN WE SPEAK OF A MAJOR EFFORT IN 1977, WE ARE NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT PROCEDURAL WAYS OF CONTINUING THE PEACE PROCESS OR OF FURTHER STEP-BY-STEP AGREEMENTS, BUT OF A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE SETTLEMENT THAT WOULD DEAL WITH ALL ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM ON ALL FRONTS -- BORDERS, THE PALESTINIANS, GUARANTEES, ETC. THE PRESIDENT SHOULD FURTHERMORE UNDERSTAND THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF ALL OF THE CONVERSATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS HE HAS HAD WITH TWO AMERICAN PRESIDENTS AND WITH ME.

D. A NEEDLESS CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE ARABS AND THE UNITED STATES WOULD PUT THIS PROSPECT IN SERIOUS JEOPARDY. ISRAEL'S STRATEGY IS CLEARLY TO SIT TIGHT AND LET NOTHING HAPPEN IN THE EXPECTATION THAT OVER THE NEXT YEAR JS-ARAB RELATIONS WILL DETERIORATE TO THE POINT WHERE THE US ADMINISTRATION WILL LOSE ITS POLITICAL BASE IN PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION AND WILL BE UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING TO MOVE MATTERS TOWARD A FINAL JUST AND DURABLE PEACE AS A FRIEND I URGE THE PRESIDENT NOT TO FALL INTO THIS TRAP.

E. FINALLY, I MUST WITH ALL RESPECT TELL THE PRESIDENT THAT HIS ANALYSIS OF THE ADVANTAGES OF USING THE SECURITY COUNCIL AS A NEGOTIATING FORUM, RATHER THAN A PREPARATORY CONFERENCE AND GENEVA, DIFFERS FUNDAMENTALLY FROM MINE. IN A SECURITY COUNCIL CONTEXT, THE PRESSURES FOCUSED ON US WOULD BE MAXIMIZED AND OUR MANEUVERABILITY WOULD BE AT A MINIMUM. IN ADDITION, EXTRANEIOUS ISSUES WOULD BE INEVITABLY INTRODUCED AND PROPOSALS WOULD BE MADE BY OTHERS FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES, WITH THE RESULT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO POSSIBILITY OF COMING TO GRIPS IN A REALISTIC AND MEANINGFUL WAY WITH THE ISSUES OF MOST CONCERN TO SYRIA.

F. WE WILL OF COURSE HAVE PRESIDENT ASAD'S VIEWS AS CON-
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VEYED THROUGH YOU IN MIND AS WE CONTINUE OUR CONSULTATIONS, BUT I MUST TELL HIM FRANKLY THAT I DO NOT AT THIS POINT SEE IN THEM A BASIS FOR MAKING ANY PROGRESS OR FOR BEGINNING TO PREPARE THE GROUNDS OVER THE MONTHS AHEAD FOR THE ULTIMATE MAJOR EFFORT WE ENVISAGE TO ACHIEVE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THERE BE DIPLOMATIC MOVEMENT OF SOME KIND, EVEN IF IT DOES NOT PRODUCE IMMEDIATE DRAMATIC RESULTS, IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN AND BUILD

UPON POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CREATE HERE
FOR MOVING TO THE BASIC ISSUES OF A FINAL PEACE WHICH WE
HAVE SO OFTEN DISCUSSED. THE NEXT YEAR CAN BE ONE OF PRE-
PARING THE WAY, AND IT WOULD BE A TRAGEDY IF INSTEAD THE
GROUND ALREADY GAINED WERE LOST. KISSINGER

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